(23)

Bentivolyo,

OR

Good Will to all that are Called

UNCONFORMISTS,

OR

To all the PEOPLE of

GOD.

Printed in the Year MDCLXVII.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

To the Reader.

Reader,

THat you may not expect more than you are like to find here; expect nothing but good will, which I hope you will find; but I will promise you here is neither Courtship nor Rhetorick, but so far from it, that it is scarce orderly and methodical; but as the unbred Countryman which can say but little, only wish you well, and say *Good be with you*: even such are these undrest naked lines: It may be you will say it is a shame to send so undrest and naked a thing abroad; but it is young and little, therefore the less shame, and besides, the Mother is poor, and hath not fine cloaths to dress it with, therefore begs of all that shall meet it, to use it favourably, and think the best of it, because it is but young and little; and the greatest kindness you can do it or its Mother, is to take it home and dress it (the Face is good) and send it abroad again: I have nothing to give it but the Name, which is *Bentivolyo*.

Psal.

Pſal. 92. verſ, 1. 2.

It is a good thing to give praiſe unto the Lord, and to ſing praiſes unto thy Name, O moſt High. To ſhew forth thy Loving kindneſs in the morning, and thy faithfulneſs every night,

MY intent and purpoſe is only to ſpeak (though poorly and weakly) that little ſence I have of the faithfulneſs and loving kindneſs of God, to my ſelf and theſe people called *Fanaticks*, and to perſwade them (if I may do it) to conſider the faithfulneſs of God in the Day or Night of thick darkneſs, and not only to repine and murmure at our ſufferings though they be great; but to remember the faithfulneſs of the Lord, that he hath not left us, nor given us over to deſtruction; but we have yet a place of Repentance, and a time to conſider why we are thus afflicted; and in loving kindneſs and faithfulneſs to us he hath born long, he hath been a God of long-ſuffering toward us; truly we may ſee him waiting to be gratious, and that he doth not afflict willingly if we will but obſerve his doings: How gently did the ſufferings of the people begin, with ſome particular Families, and ſome particular perſons there, timing of others; and then to the Nation in general Wars was threatned firſt (to ſee what that would do) then brought upon it; then the Sickneſs, ſtill as if the Lord waited to ſee if we would leave the evil of our ways; then the Fire, which was a heavy Judgement upon all, but fell heavieſt upon thoſe which are called, and call themſelves the people of God; and now the Lord ſeems to wait, to ſee whether they will yet return or no: It is now very near twelve months ſince the Fire; not one of theſe

twelve but we have feared, and been in expectation of very great and ſudden deſtruction; and if the mercies of God had not over-ruled mercileſs and cruel men, we might not now have been left to have given thanks to the Lord for his loving kindneſs and faithfulneſs to poor man, which is the firſt thing you ought to doe, to give thanks to the Lord, and to ſhew forth his loving kindneſs in the morning, and his faithfulneſs every night; and let me tell you, He is faithful in Judgement as well as in Mercy, and if Mercy will not do, Judgement muſt, and in great faithfulneſs too, for if you be his, he will not loſe you: Therefore that we may turn to him while he is waiting to be gracious; before he brings more and further Judgement upon us; while his wrath is kindled but a little, that he may turn in mercy, and heal our backſlidings.

Firſt the great and general cry is againſt wickedneſs in general, and the evil of the times we now live in; but few or none conſider their own evil, why, or for what iniquity was my Family viſited, or for what ſin was my Eſtate or my Relation loſt in the War, or was mine or mine conſumed in the Fire; not that theſe were Sinners on whom theſe Judgements came, more than thoſe on whom they did not come, but unleſs you all repent, ye ſhall likewiſe periſh; It is a warning to thoſe on whom they have not come, as well as to thoſe on whom they have, and if they do not take warning by you, they may look for greater judgements than hath yet come; you are yet in houſes, and moſt of you have enough, though not the abundance as before it may be you had, yet the ſame hand which took part could have taken all, and have ſuffered that hand to have taken our lives too; Our Saviour learnt obedience by the things which he ſuffered; it may be, if you ſeriouſly conſider, you may learn by theſe things which you ſuffer, though you may ſuffer them juſtly too; did not ſome of you ſet your hearts more upon the created than upon the Creator? did you not delight more in your wealth than in the Lord thy God? is it not then juſt you ſhould loſe it? learn then by it to ſee the vanity of things which periſh in the uſing, and lay up that which periſheth not, ſo may you keep off what is further threatned, and appeaſe thy God for what is paſt; was not ſome of you even ſwallowed up with covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry; is it not juſt then that your Idols ſhould be taken away, yes and mercy too? learn therefore to covet nothing but the beſt gifts: may it not be ſaid of moſt of us? ye have lived in pleaſure on the Earth, and have been

wanton;

wanton; have not too many spent most of their time in rioting, and feasting, taking care what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewith you shall be clothed; and I fear there is too too much of this still amongst us; but there is certainly a great evil in it, and if it be not forsaken, the latter end will be worse then the beginning, and these things to be done by those that are called the people of God, are an abomination unto him; therefore leave off to do evil, and do good: The second cry is against the abominations which are alowed of in the nation, *viz.* drunkenness, swearing, and whoring, and persecution, and all manner of evils which are publikely acted, these are abominable indeed; but for all these things they must come to judgement; we have nothing to do with them, till we have judged our selves.

Shall not God avenge for these things?

Isaiah 5, & 29 v. *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this.*

But it is not those which I spake to, it is to the people of God, to those which are called by his name (but every one which nameth the name of the Lord depart from evil, which I heartily wish that all would do) not that I would exclude the other (nor do I) from being his too; but my more present concern is for you, which calling the Lord to be your God, and your selves to be his people; to you is this good will that you would turn to the Lord withal your heart, and withal your strength, and put a stop to this hand of Judgment which is upon the Nation; God takes more notice of your sins then he doth of theirs; they pretend no more service to him then that they may be saved by him, you profess to love him, and to be beloved by him, to whom much was given, much was required; you have had a greater talent; theirs are sins of commission, yours sins of omission you omit what you know you should do; they cry Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners, and think they have done enough: You know that in a Princes or a nobles Mans house there are many offices, some a-e inferior, *viz.* gromes, sculians &c. and some superior, as those that attend his own person; now the inferior, as the grome, or the scullian, if they commit a fault it may be it is not taken notice of by their Lord and Master, he doth not take notice to correct his inferior offi-

John 14, & 2. *In my father house are many Mansions.*

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cers as he doth the other; yet if they continue to be faulty, and do not refrain, but be ſtuborn and rebellious, ſo that complaint be made and their Lord hear, they will be ſeverely puniſhed, if not turned off; But thoſe which are ſuperior if they commit a fault it is ſeen preſently, becauſe they attend the preſence, and ſo if they are faulty; or if they neglect their duty, it is a greater diſhonor to their Lord then if the grome or the like did a fault; and ſo it is with all you that are called the ſervants of God, if you be found faulty; though it be a leſſer fault then theirs as you may think, yet it is a greater becauſe you did it, and a greater diſhonor to God: Therefore to all that are, and deſire to be the ſervants or the children of the true God, they muſt give a conſtant attendance on the Lord, and not run a gading after the things of the world, after pride vanity &c. and though we ſee others before us that do ſo, and ſo, which may be a temptation, yet reſiſt the Devil and he will flye from you, examine thy ſelf when you are dreſſing and tricking, or curling your ſelf, whether you are ſerving thy Lord; or whether you are ſerving thy luſt and thy pride; if thy God you may go on; but if thy luſt leave it off though you be one by thy ſelf, and ſo in all thy life and converſation; examine thy ſelf whether you are now or now attending upon thy God; ſometimes you will, it may be, be in great ſwelling words of vanity, ſometimes lying and flattering one with another in courtſhip and complimenting, as you call it, and if ſo know that you are out of your place, and not ſerving your Lord; wherefore make haſt to repent, and humble your ſelf, and beg of the Lord to forgive you, and to receive you again.

The third cry is againſt the wickedneſs of the Papiſts, and Popery, and it may be juſt too, and we may juſtly pray as *David* did to be delivered from the wicked, but let us alſo conſider what *David* ſaith in that place in the 17 *Pſalm*, and part of the 13 and 14 verſes, *Deliver my ſoul from the wicked*, which is the word; the 14 from men which are thy hand, O Lord from men of the world; therefore when judgement comes upon you, or upon a Nation by the wicked, not to fret at the wicked, but to look on it as it is the ſword of the Lord, and his ſword never comes but where there is need of it; men are the hand of God, and men of the world too; ſometimes he makes uſe of them to puniſh us, ſometimes to try us, and when he will he can ſtay his hand, and men can do nothing: Now we have theſe two things before us to ſtop this hand too, hear the word, and

whoſe

whose it is; not to stop our ears and go on, but to hear and turn; then we have like *David* to pray, pray to be delivered, not that our bodies only may be delivered from their cruelty, but our souls from their snare; and I am perswaded that God hath yet mercy for this people, and might be yet intreated for this Nation, if there were any that could ask aright; O strive all of you that if it may be we may all with one hand, and one heart, put up a petition to the great King of Kings in the behalf of the Nation, and lay aside all private interest of your own: when you petition your earthly King, or any great Person, you are all agreed together, and one doth it in the name of all, and all give their consent to it; but here to our heavenly King (which I think is a great evill amongst you) one would have one thing, and another would have another thing, and you are not all agreed of your petition how you would have it, or what you would have; How then can you expect any thing that know not what you would have? if you could all have what you would have, sure there would then be great confusion, as there is now: I hope you all serve one Master, and are one family (and do believe that some of all do so) how is it then that you are displeased, that all are not in the same place one of another: The Presbyterians would have all to be as they be, and the Independant as they be, and the Baptist as they be, and the Quakers as they be; this is the reason why you cannot joy all with one consent; it may be God is ready (and waits) for your prayer, or your petition, and you are not ready to give it up; for shame then leave off interest of private parties, and the interest of persons, and joy with one consent for the good of the whole, and for the honor of the Lord, and that judgement may run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream, and that there is no stoping of, it will run do what you can; you need not be concerned for this or that, all will have part then; you meet together, and ask what you think to be best, and it may be you would be all glad to see this; but you cannot all agree to come together to ask it; if you could all meet together to humble your selves before the Lord, & beg this thing of him it may be he would hear, *Jonah* 3, 9. Who can still it, God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not: We have in many places in Scripture, that God forgetteth not the humble; and *David* in the 10 *Psalm* makes a prayer to God, that he would not forget the humble; and the Lord himself often takes notice of a people that humble them as often as we read of any that humbled themselves; we read also that God was merciful to them.

Chro.

Chro. 2, 12. *And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to* Shemaiah, *saying, they have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them.* Me thinks these be great incouragements for all to come together, and humble themselves; but it may be you will say I am not in the way, and there is but one way true, I say so too, there is but one way which is *Christ, he is the way, the Truth, and the Life,* John 14, 6. The way of righteousness is the way: Well then you all own one God (don't you) the God of Heaven; What ailes you then that you cannot all pray to that God for righteousness and truth; we be all Sinners, why can't we all humble our selves before him? Can't you that are a Presbyterian be righteous in your way? and you that are an Independant be righteous in your way? and you Baptist in your way? and you Quaker in your way? and if you all are righteous, then you all are in one way, the way of righteousness, and that is the right way, *Rom.* 14, 8, 5. *Let every one be fully perswaded in his own mind,* and walk uprightly in his way, and make good use of what light he has, and God will give him more; though there is a sort of people that presume to say, *there never was nor never shall be a greater light than what they have,* but to them I say they be mistaken; there is a light, which when it shall appear, will dazle their eyes and make their light appear dark; but walk up to what you have as children of the light, and let us agree in this to do the works of righteousness and to love one another, for love is the fulfilling of the Law and with thus doing, and being reconciled to one another; I hope God will be reconciled to us. Only this one thing more and I have done, That it is not meetings only, and abundance of Sacrifices that the Lord will accept of, but read *Micah* 6, 6 7, 8, and 9th. *verses*, and there you shall have in plain what the Lord will be pleased with.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oyle; shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. The Lords voice crieth unto the City, and the man of wisdom shall see thy Name: hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.

That you would consider of this, and practice it, is all I would advise, and so farewell.

FINIS.